



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS FOR

# Residential Garage Conversions

CITY OF SAN DIEGO DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
1222 FIRST AVENUE, MS 301, SAN DIEGO, CA 92101-4153  
Call (619) 446-5300 for appointments and (619) 446-5000 for information.

INFORMATION  
BULLETIN  
**142**  
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This information bulletin describes the minimum requirements for obtaining a permit to convert a garage of a Single Dwelling Unit or Duplex to habitable (or non-parking) area. It also outlines potential problems typically associated with such a conversion, allowing an applicant to evaluate the feasibility of a proposed garage conversion. This bulletin does not pertain to the temporary conversion of a garage for a real estate sales office in a new subdivision.

For clarification regarding the permit process or information contained in this bulletin, visit the Development Review Center, 1222 First Avenue, third floor, or phone (619) 446-5000.

## I. OVERVIEW OF GARAGE CONVERSION CONSIDERATIONS

The following is a list of potential problems typically associated with garage conversions.

### A. Replacement parking

Residential garages are typically constructed to satisfy a zoning requirement for off-street parking. The conversion of a required parking area to non-parking use requires the replacement of parking spaces eliminated by that conversion. The replacement of these spaces is not permitted within the front or street side yard setback areas unless all of the following requirements are met:

1. The property is in an RS zone;
2. The garage was converted prior to January 1, 1992;
3. No other on-site alternative placement options for parking are available;
4. The parking area is perpendicular to the public right-of-way and between the sidewalk adjacent to the property and the building setback;
5. The area is 8' x 18' for unobstructed space;
6. The parking area utilizes a maximum of five feet of the undeveloped public right-of-way. **In no case shall the sidewalk be obstructed or encroached upon by a vehicle parked within this area;**
7. The maximum parking area width cannot exceed 25-feet.

### B. Driveway(s)

An existing driveway will be required to be closed if it no longer leads to legal off-street parking. New driveways may also be required when replacement

## Documents referenced in this Information Bulletin

- General Application (DS-3032)
- Water Meter Data Card (DS-16)
- CF-1R/MF-1R Forms
- Regional Standards Drawings
- Building Newsletter 23-4
- Parcel Information Checklist (DS-302)

### Information Bulletins:

- 501, "Fee Schedule, Construction Permits - Structures"
- 112, "Minimum Construction Specifications"
- 117, "Regulations Covering Permit Expiration and Extension"
- 118, "How to Process Changes to Approved Plans"
- 122, "Plot Plan and Vicinity Map"
- 133, "Roof and Floor Framing Span Tables"

parking is provided elsewhere on the lot. Any work in the public right-of-way requires a permit and must be constructed per San Diego Regional Standards.

### C. Building Setback Requirements

Zoning regulations allow a garage, under certain circumstances, to encroach into side or rear yard setback areas (Land Development Code Section 142.0510 (e)). Portions of garages not observing the required side or rear yard setback area may not be converted to living space without an approved variance.

### D. Sleeping Rooms

For safety reasons, gas fired water heaters or furnaces are not allowed to be in rooms used for sleeping purposes. If the converted garage is to be used for sleeping purposes, the water heater and/or furnace may need to be relocated or enclosed.

### E. Other Applicable Codes

All applicable provisions of the California Building Code, California Mechanical Code, California Plumbing Code, National Electrical Code, and Title 24 California Energy Efficiency Standards must be met when converting garages to living space.

## II. YOUR OPTIONS FOR SERVICE

Plans may be checked "over-the-counter" by appointment during normal business hours. Saturday morning appointments are available for homeowners.

"Printed on recycled paper. Visit our web page at [www.sandiego.gov/development-services](http://www.sandiego.gov/development-services). This information is available in alternative format for persons with disabilities, upon request."

Phone (619) 446-5300 to schedule an appointment. Appointments are also recommended for obtaining information prior to plan preparation.

### III. PLAN SPECIFICATIONS

Plans must be drawn to scale and must be of sufficient clarity to indicate the location, nature and extent of the work proposed. Be sure to clearly label all existing and all proposed construction. Three sets of plans are required.

Plans must show, in detail, that the proposed work will conform to the provisions of the California Building Code, Land Development Code, and all other relevant laws, ordinances, rules and regulations. Many of the California Building Code requirements are summarized in Information Bulletin 112, "Minimum Construction Specifications."

Land Development Code information is available at the Development Review Center, 1222 First Avenue, (619) 446-5000 and on the Web.

### IV. FORMS TO COMPLETE

#### ❑ A. General Application

All projects must be submitted with a General Application. Instructions can be found on the reverse side of the application. If you intend to obtain your permit on the same day as plan review, the application must be fully completed. Note: there are *no* exceptions to the Workers' Compensation Insurance requirements. If the property owner is doing the construction work or is hiring a number of different contractors, a separate Owner-Builder Verification form must be signed by the owner at the Development Review Center before the permit can be issued.

#### ❑ B. Parcel Information Checklist

#### ❑ C. Water Meter Data Card

A Water Meter Data Card must be completed if new plumbing fixtures are being added.

#### ❑ D. Title 24 Compliance Forms

A Certificate of Compliance: Residential (CF-1R) form and a Mandatory Measures Checklist (MF-1R) must be submitted to demonstrate compliance with California State Energy Efficiency Standards for garages converted to habitable space. Information on completing these forms is in Section VI.

#### ❑ E. Parcel Information Checklist (DS-302)

### V. DRAWINGS TO INCLUDE

Following are guidelines for minimum drawings to include in the plans for a typical garage conversion.

#### ❑ A. Plot Plan and Vicinity Map

This drawing shows the general layout of the lot and must include the following information:

1. Property lines and dimensions.
2. The existing building footprint including dimensions and distances to adjacent property lines.

Include items such as eave overhangs, bay windows, fireplaces.

3. The proposed construction, noting the dimension of the exterior walls and the distances to adjacent property lines.
4. Any accessory structures and dimensions and the distances from these structures to adjacent property lines and to adjoining structures.
5. If plumbing fixtures are being installed, show the location of water and sewer lines and the location of the water meter.
6. Access to an off-street parking area, with the parking area dimensioned.

#### ❑ B. Floor Plan

For the garage conversion, show proposed rooms and all adjoining rooms. Include the following information:

1. Use and dimensions of rooms.
2. Size and type of windows, sill height and doors.
3. Size of headers above new wall openings.
4. Location of plumbing fixtures.
5. Location and energy output (BTUs) of heating equipment.
6. Location and type of any new vent fans.
7. Location of smoke detectors.

#### ❑ C. Foundation Plan

For slab floor construction, this drawing must show:

1. Size, depth, and location of new footings (for new wall where garage door is being removed, see Figure 1).
2. Thickness of concrete slab.
3. Any new concrete work or floor framing associated with the conversion. If constructing a raised wood floor on wood sleepers over the existing concrete slab, all wood must be treated, including the subfloor (see Building Newsletter 23-4).

#### ❑ D. Elevation Views

This is a drawing of each new exterior wall from the outside of the building. Include the following:

1. Doors, windows and other openings.
2. Exterior finishes for the walls and roof.
3. Wall bracing or shear panel locations or other means of obtaining the required lateral bracing.

#### ❑ E. Connection Details

Sufficient details must be shown to clearly explain the method of construction and means of connection for any new walls.

#### ❑ F. Electrical/Plumbing Plans

No electrical drawings are required. Electrical requirements are checked by the Field Inspector.

The only plumbing drawings required are the

plumbing fixture locations shown on the floor plans. Compliance with the City Water Utilities Retrofit Ordinance must be shown for new fixtures on the plans as follows:

1. Ultra low flush toilets.
2. Maximum 2.2 gallons per minute for faucets.
3. Maximum 2.5 gallons per minute for showerheads.

#### □ G. Roof Framing Plan

If you are modifying existing framing in the roof area (for example, to provide ceiling joists where the garage roof framing presently is comprised of rafter and rafter ties only), a roof framing plan must be provided. Include the following information:

1. When modifying rafters, please indicate hips, valleys and ridges for both new and existing construction. Dimension both new and existing roofs.
2. Rafter and ceiling joist size and spacing.
3. Any special framing at the roof area.

For information on sizing rafters and ceiling joists see Information Bulletin 133, "Roof and Floor Framing Span Tables." Any proposed framing not meeting conventional construction standards may require submittal of plans and calculations by a licensed engineer.

## VI. TITLE 24 ENERGY DOCUMENTATION

All single-Dwelling or duplex additions or alterations are required to comply with California Energy Efficiency Standards for Low-Rise Residential Buildings contained in the California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 1. A number of compliance methods are described in a Residential Manual available from the California Energy Commission, phone 1-800-772-3300.

Minimum acceptable requirements for the simplest method of meeting the requirements are shown in the table above. You may complete the required Certificate of Compliance Form (CF-1R) using the information shown in this table. You must also show the required insulation values and dual pane windows on your plans. Also complete a Mandatory Measures Checklist (MF-1R) by checking all the items that apply to your project. The CF-1R form and the Mandatory Measures Checklist are available at the Development Review Center.

If you present energy conservation calculations or some other method of documenting energy compliance, you may be required to leave a set of plans for plan review. Normally this plan review will be completed within eight working days.

## VII. THE PLAN REVIEW PROCESS

Every effort will be made to approve the plans for the project during the first plan review. Questions may arise that cannot be answered immediately, or it

### Title 24 Energy Requirements (Climate Zone 7)

Floor Area	<101 sq ft	<1000 sq ft
Insulation:		
Ceiling	R-19	R-30
Wall	R-13	R-13
Floor	R-13	R-19
Glass:		
Type	Dual Pane	Dual Pane
Sq.Ft.	max. 50*	20% of FA*

\*The area of any glass removed, as a direct result of the room addition, may be added to the 20%.

may be necessary to refer you to other agencies for approval. A review sheet will be prepared for you detailing what you are expected to do to complete the plan review process. If the permit cannot be issued at the initial appointment, plan check and application fees must be paid (see Section VIII, Fees).

Once all clearances are approved and all questions are answered, schedule another appointment at (619) 446-5300 to complete the plan review process and receive your permit.

At your appointment, you will need to present two full sets of plans with all approval signatures, copies of any calculations, copies of all review sheets, and all completed forms. You will need a third set of plans including the site plan and floor plan for the County Assessor. This set need not have approval signatures.

## VIII. FEES

Plan check fees must be paid at the time of initial plan review. When the building permit can be issued at the same time, the plan check fee and combination permit fee will appear on one invoice. These fees must be paid when the permit is issued.

If your garage conversion is 500 square feet or more in area, school fees will be due. Projects under 500 square feet in area are exempt. If you are in the San Diego Unified School District, you may pay school fees at the Development Review Center by separate check made payable to the "San Diego Unified School District." If your project is located in another school district, or if you wish to pay cash, you will be directed to that school district's office to pay school fees. You must have documentation from the Development Review Center to take to the school district for fee calculation. For estimated fee amounts for San Diego Unified School District, call (858) 637-3687.

Occasionally, addition of plumbing fixtures results in a requirement for increasing the water meter size. If so, San Diego County Water Authority capacity fees will be due. These can be paid at the Development

Review Center by separate check. An estimate of the fee amount will be provided when the required size of the meter is known. Upgrading the water meter usually is not required when adding only one new bathroom.

### IX. WHEN THE PERMIT IS ISSUED

You will receive an Inspection Record card at permit issuance. The inspector signs this card as the construction is inspected and approved. If the project includes electrical work, an electric Circuit Card will also be provided at permit time. This card must be completed for the inspector prior to calling for electrical inspection.

At permit issuance a stamped, approved set of plans will be returned to you. This set must be available for the Field Inspector. Your construction will be expected to conform to the approved plans. *All unapproved work will be required to be exposed for test (when necessary) and review for compliance.*

If it is necessary to change the plans during construction, changes must be approved at the Development Review Center. For information on processing changes see Information Bulletin 118, "How to Process Changes to Approved Plans."

The permit is active for 180 days after the date of issuance. Scheduling an inspection will extend the permit for 180 days from the date the inspection passes. Additional information on permit expiration and extensions can be found in Information Bulletin 117,

"Regulations Covering Permit Expiration and Extension."

The Inspection Record card, the approved plans, and the permit are important records and should be preserved.

### X. SCHEDULING AN INSPECTION

You may schedule inspections by phoning the City's Automated Phone Inspection Line at (858) 581-7111. The InspectionLine is available seven days a week between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. The InspectionLine allows you to schedule inspections up to five days in advance; obtain the inspector's name and phone number; leave a voice message for the inspector; and obtain the status of the inspection.

Figure 1/Typical Garage Section Detail

